

SEEING FACES: MATERIAL DIVERSIFICATION AND IDENTITY PERFORMANCE
THROUGH ROMANO-BRITISH FACE POTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews Romano-British face pots, a ceramic type first discussed by Braithwaite (1984; 2007). By focusing on inter-provincial differences in depositional context and conducting a technical analysis of the pots' functionality and practicality, this paper expands our understanding of not only how face pots might have been used, but also how such uses were informative of identity formation and performance in Roman Britain. Despite inherent methodological complications such as limited provenience records and a small sample size, it is argued in this paper that the Romano-British face pots display behaviors unique to the province and thus are productive material conduits for challenging antiquated cultural binaries, and for illustrating Romano-British ideas of identity and the body.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Danielle Vander Horst is a MA student in Archaeology at Cornell University. She received her Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude, Highest Distinction, with Highest Honors in Research from the University of Rochester where she wrote a thesis titled, “Making Men Gods: the precedence and pursuit of deification at Rome.” During her time at Cornell, Danielle has expanded her intellectual interests to include a wider geographical scope of the Roman empire, and she is currently exploring issues such as identity formation and performance in antiquity, and how these topics are informed by contextual instances of material agency, engagement, and use diversification. She is also highly invested in the morals and ethics of archaeology, and participated as a member of Cornell’s winning team at the 2018 SAA Ethics Bowl.

Danielle plans to continue her pursuit of ancient peoples and places by beginning a PhD program starting in the Fall of 2020.

For Matthew.

No, it's not too many commas.

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[Introduction]

Studies of Romano-British pottery have explored processes of social change in Britain under Roman rule by tracking patterns of material consumption.¹ One form of ceramic that has not received much attention, however, is the Romano-British (RB hereafter) face pot. Although previously studied for their striking aesthetic qualities², RB face pots have not been made to speak to contemporary archaeological concerns. This paper takes a consumption-based approach to understanding RB face pots that resituates these vessels into their social contexts of use. Such an approach will help parse out formations and performances of RB identities, and how ideas of identity and personhood relate to contemporaneous conceptualizations of the body.

To accomplish the goals of this paper, I first establish the background of the RB face pots, summarizing their place within the wider field of RB studies. I then discuss the pots themselves, the work that has already been conducted on them, and their distribution patterns, placing emphasis on the crucial differences between continental face pots from the Rhineland region and those from Britain. Next, I assess the face pots' functional and practical capabilities as ceramic vessels. The focus here is not exclusively on the form of the pot and the style of the faces, but rather on how the morphological composition of the pots affect their "user-friendliness" and the ways in which consumers would have handled them. This portion of the paper is informed by an analysis of 9 whole face pots³ that I personally handled, and draws upon James Gibson's notion of affordances⁴ and Jean-Pierre Warnier's concept of praxeology⁵ in

¹ See Willis 1996; Willis 1998; Pitts 2005; Pitts 2006; Pitts 2017.

² Most notably, see Braithwaite 1984; 2001; 2007.

³ Limited face pot availability in certain collections and a tight research budget hindered the addition of more whole vessels. As will be discussed, however, the vessels studied represent a diverse array of morphological characteristics in an attempt to counteract the small sample size.

⁴ Specifically of objects, Gibson 1979, 133-4.

⁵ Warnier 2001, 9-13; 2006, 3-4, 10.

order to ground my personal observations in more conceptual terms. Finally, I apply my findings and interpretations to select case studies to illustrate the ways in which these vessels were engaged with to display and perform aspects of Romano-British identities.

[Setting the Stage: The Romanization Problem]

For decades, studies of Roman Britain have been influenced by the idea of Romanization⁶, an increasingly outdated model that relies on hierarchical socio-cultural binaries to explain processes of social change. According to this model, Mediterranean drinking vessels, amphorae, and coins among pre-Roman British assemblages were but evidence of the power of empire culturally converting the soon to be conquered Celtic populations. After the province was annexed, the materially rich Roman city was a symbol of culture and civilization with its fine ‘Roman’ pottery and orthogonal planning. Meanwhile, the rural town was deemed as either resistant to or economically disadvantaged from accessing Roman culture due to its lack of ‘Roman’ materials.⁷ The concept left no room for a dialogue between ancient populations, insisting only on the beneficial and wholly dominant influence that Rome had on the uncultured barbarian. Challenges to these principles have arisen since the 1980s with works such as those by Martin Millett that sought to highlight how local elite agency played a role in the Roman annexation.⁸ Since the 1990s issues of identity and subsequently personhood have entered the debate as a part of the postcolonial turn in Romano-British studies.⁹ These contemporary

⁶ For the origins of Romanization and ‘Roman’ versus ‘Celtic native’ dichotomies see Haverfield 1915; Collingwood and Myres 1937.

⁷ Haverfield 1915. See also Ferris 2012, 20.

⁸ Millett 1990. See also Hingley 2005, 74-89.

⁹ See works such as Mattingly 2004. Hingley 2005, 91-116. See also Pitts 2007. More broadly see Cornell 2004, Fowler 2004, esp. 23-47.

interests—identity and personhood—have driven scholars to conduct studies more attuned to the social complexities and lived realities of the peoples who inhabited pre-Roman and Roman Britain. Thus, a more nuanced image of the province has emerged.

Prior to its annexation, late pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) Britain existed as a collection of independent tribes predominantly inhabiting hillforts and agricultural settlements. Tribes were constantly shifting entities with changing alliances-up into the Roman period. Though British populations were separated from the continent by the channel, they were far from isolated. Cross-channel trading was evident with imported goods from Gaul and Germania appearing in British assemblages back into the fourth century BCE.¹⁰ Tribes would continue to adopt and disregard imported goods as it suited them up until the province was annexed, imbuing these goods with unique meanings within their specific socio-cultural contexts. By the time Claudius invaded the island in 43 CE, a series of alliances between southeastern British kingdoms and Rome had already been established, many of which would continue well into the initial occupation period.¹¹ While some tribes certainly resisted the Roman invasion, many others saw the benefits of a partnership with Rome and worked to integrate themselves into the larger fabric of empire. ‘Native’ British cultures were not necessarily in opposition to ‘foreign’ Roman powers but rather the relationship was dialectic, facilitating the rise of new Romano-British cultural identities.

¹⁰ De la Bedoyere 2013, 13-17. Haselgrove 1982. Millett 1990, 9-35 more broadly on LPRIA societal and consumption patterns. Hill 2007. Webley 2015. Champion 2016, 150-1, 155-7. Moore 2016, 263-8. See also Pitts 2008, 497-500 on changes in south-eastern British assemblages due to influxes of continental connections and goods.

¹¹ Creighton 2001, 4.

Since its emergence in the 20th century, there have been countless critiques of and responses to Romanization¹², and more modern scholarship has revisited the ways in which we conceptualize social change through the study of material culture in Roman Britain.

Acculturation¹³ has been suggested as an alternative conceptual framework, and hybridization and creolization¹⁴ soon followed in response, but these have all been discussed with varying degrees of success, each coming with its own flaws and intellectual baggage. Globalization theory—and the related glocalization¹⁵—have garnered the most popularity recently, and perhaps for good reason. While other frameworks still rely upon dichotomous notions of ‘A’ versus ‘B’, us versus them, globalization theory accounts for a larger scale of constantly circulating connectivity¹⁶ that does not rely upon the centralization of one cultural pillar from which many peripheral nodes extend. Within this model, the biographies of material objects extend beyond their just being ‘things’ and instead grant them room to be cultural subjects in their own right, affecting and being affected by the shifting tides of social change.

It is within this framework that I will place the RB face pots and recontextualize them as objects of cultural power, capable of engaging with their users just as much as they are engaged with.

¹² For a succinct history and critique of Romanization see Van Oyen 2016, 288-92. See also Webster 2001; Pitts and Versluys 2015.

¹³ For critique of acculturation in the Romanization debate, see Versluys 2015, 144-6.

¹⁴ Webster 2001.

¹⁵ Pitts 2008, 493-5.

¹⁶ See Versluys 2015, 163-4.

[Face Pots: The Patterns and Problems]

Roman face pots are a widely distributed, albeit rare type of globular ceramic vessel with recorded finds across modern-day Italy, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Austria, and Britain.¹⁷ They vary in shape and size, but predominately take on globular forms and only ever have one face on the body of the vessel (see Appendix I). Face pot traditions and styles similar to those seen at the height of their production emerge during the mid-Republican period in Italy, spreading further outside the peninsula with Rome's expansion. Face pots truly flourish in style and quantity from the mid-first century BCE and onwards, reaching their maximum distribution between the second and fourth centuries CE in regions of northern Europe.

To date, there has been only one monographic study on Roman face pots titled *Faces from the Past: A Study of Roman Face Pots from Italy and the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (2007) by Gillian Braithwaite¹⁸. In her study, Braithwaite shows that the Roman military was the main vehicle of face pot distribution across the empire, and that on the continent military populations¹⁹ were the primary consumers of face pots. Among these military populations, face

¹⁷ As face pots share similar characteristics to other anthropomorphic ceramic vessel types, for the purposes of this paper, 'face pot' will be used exclusively to discuss the globular ceramic vessels with one abstract human face applied to the outside surface that were produced in Britain from ca. 45-400 CE, as well as those produced in Germany. Vessels such as neck flagons, although related to face pots in their use of medium (clay) and iconography (human faces), are not to be included as 'face pots' given their considerable morphological and technical differences. They will factor into the discussion later on, however. The following established forms are also excluded from this analysis: planetary vases, head jars, head urns (including canopic jars), and any vessel upon which the face has been painted (e.g. kylixes).

¹⁸ For a succinct review and overview of Braithwaite's work, see Biddulph 2009; for a more detailed synopsis and review, see Darling 2010.

¹⁹ It is worthy to note that not every legion has been linked to the use of face pots. For example, legions stationed in Dalmatia and southern Moesia show signs of early face pot and beaker traditions, but these do not last beyond initial occupation periods and with the eventual withdrawal of the legions. Other regions of the empire – North Africa, Egypt, and the Greek-speaking east most notably – lack a face pot tradition entirely, with no evidence discernible in military or any other occupied contexts (Braithwaite 2007, 329-336). Braithwaite (2007, 335-6) asserts that this pattern reflects legionary connections to Northern Italy "in the later years of the first century BC and in the early years of the first century AD," as only legions with these connections appear to have developed face pot traditions of any consequence.

pots occur predominantly in burial contexts as cinerary urns²⁰, and are thought to be chiefly ritualistic, chthonic, or apotropaic objects due to their association with funerary rites²¹.

Occasional instances of face pots in non-funerary contexts are found in active military forts and *vici*, but these occurrences are rare and most often represented by secondary deposits in rubbish pits. Face pots occurring outside of military or military-associated sites and in non-funerary capacities on the continent are next to non-existent.²² This may in part be due to the differences in how commercial archaeology is carried out in Britain versus Germany²³, however, contradictory and binary interpretations within Braithwaite's work also create a confusing picture.

Many of Braithwaite's assertions regarding the Rhineland face pots and their military contexts are reneged within the same work, culminating in a confusing image of contextual distributions in this region. While she admits that most of the Rhineland region pots are from funerary contexts, in which they are being utilized as cinerary urns, she then goes on to assert that just as many could arguably be coming from domestic contexts. Furthermore, Braithwaite lacks any concrete definition of what she considers to be 'domestic' or even 'military, neglecting to address the idea that these are not two contexts that mutually exclude each other.²⁴ By limiting find contexts to either military or non-military, Braithwaite essentially implements a binary classification system wherein military equates Roman and non-military equates non-Roman. Thus, the approach I offer in this paper revisits and expands upon Braithwaite's work by adding

²⁰ Braithwaite 2007, 238.

²¹ Braithwaite 1984, 123-4; Braithwaite 2007. See also Cotton 1996, 89.

²² Braithwaite 2007, 76, 340.

²³ British archaeology focuses greatly on rural domestic and urban sites, while a focus in Germany has been on border forts and veteran settlements (Eckardt 2014, 213). New evidence from Germany supporting non-military and non-funerary examples of face pot consumption would show exciting cultural connections between Roman Britain and Roman Germany, but such evidence has yet to come to light.

²⁴ Gates-Foster and Godsey 2018.

new data and a new approach that allows for use diversification both within and without military contexts. While I do not intend to depreciate the contributions Braithwaite has made to this topic, I do think it imperative that these issues be addressed especially as this work takes quite a different approach than Braithwaite's own.

Just as on the continent, the introduction of face pots to British populations is attributed to the Roman military for a few reasons. Perhaps most conclusively there is an absence of any face pots in Britain prior to the Claudian invasion ca. 50 CE.²⁵ This absence is certainly not for a lack of access to Mediterranean goods, but more likely because continental face pots rarely, if ever, occurred outside of military forts and their immediate *vici*. Furthermore, distribution patterns of the pots during the conquest period in Britain (ca. 43-84 CE)²⁶ center predominately around active military sites. Facial aesthetics of the pots are also indicative of their non-British origins, as early examples share many stylistic features with continental pots²⁷ such as wide, open mouths and large, hooked noses.²⁸ Yet even during the conquest period, RB face pots already exhibited signs of diversification with examples from within non-military and non-funerary contexts.

Map one (see Appendix I) depicts the contextual distributions of RB face pots during Period One (43-84 CE).²⁹ Each color represents the presence of a specific context at sites with

²⁵ Braithwaite (2007, xiii, 352) suggests that there may very well have existed parallel traditions in perishable materials to the face pots in pre-Roman Celtic assemblages, but this argument lacks substantiation. The face-pot faces with their 3D molding strikes me as rather difficult to reproduce in other, perishable material forms such as basketry or woodworking.

²⁶ In discussing the periods of face pot usage in Roman Britain, I will utilize the three periods outlined by Braithwaite in her catalogue: the conquest period (43-83 CE), period two (the later first to the early third century), and period three (the later second to fourth century).

²⁷ It is not surprising that RB materials parallel those in continental contexts, as there was a great amount of movement both of people and goods across the English Channel during the Roman period (Eckardt 2014, 2).

²⁸ See Braithwaite 2007, 239-51.

²⁹ To determine the specific contexts of each find represented on the distribution maps I utilized Braithwaite's typology (2007, 237-314) and the primary publications and museum records she cites.

RB face pot finds, and not necessarily the quantity of face pots present.³⁰ Gloucester, for example, has face pot finds originating in both military (purple) and non-military funerary (pink) contexts. Similarly, finds at Usk³¹ and London³² also show more diverse contexts with religious uses of face pots away from established military spaces with vessels deposited as votives at shrines and along riverbanks.

By the end of the first century, the manners in which RB face pots are used and by whom truly stand in stark contrast to continental examples, appearing in a diverse array of non-military, non-funerary contexts such as in rubbish pits, votive deposits, and domestic contexts.³³ Graph 1³⁴ (see Appendix II) depicts the frequency of context types across 32 RB sites during period one, showing that domestic (n=5) and military (n=9) contexts are the most frequent, with two instances of each context occurring concurrently at Colchester and Wroxeter³⁵. Surprisingly, there is a lack of conclusively recorded military burials across period one face pot finds in Britain. Graph 2³⁶ (see Appendix II) depicts the frequency of context types across 32 RB sites during period two and a general increase in all categories. In period two, domestic contexts (n=12) outpace military ones (n=9)—though five instances of each context overlap at Colchester, Billericay, Towcester, Old Penrith, and Camelon³⁷—while votive (n=4) and non-military funerary (n=4) finds are twice as frequent as military funerary (n=2) finds. Relatedly, geographic distribution patterns at the turn of the century and beyond also demonstrate an intensification of

³⁰ See Appendix II, tables 1 and 2. 1 = context represented by a face pot find. 0 = context not represented by a face pot find.

³¹ Manning et al. 1993, 35, 323.

³² Davies et al. 1994, 140.

³³ Braithwaite 2007, 237.

³⁴ See Appendix II, table 1 for the affiliated data.

³⁵ See Appendix II, table 1.

³⁶ See Appendix II, table 2 for the affiliated data. For both tables 1 and 2, see also Appendix II, table 3 for a synthesis of Braithwaite's period one, two, and three typologies broken down into site and contexts present.

³⁷ See Appendix II, table 2.

face pot usage in the south-eastern civilian zone of the province rather than in the north and north-western military zones (see Appendix II, map 2). By the early to mid-second century face pots are found more ubiquitously across Britain³⁸, and by the late third into the early fourth centuries RB face pots experience a surge in production and iconographic expansion, whereas the Rhineland region sees a cessation of face pot use and production.³⁹

Such inter-provincial differences between similar classes of materials are, of course, not exclusive to the RB face pots. Hella Eckardt and Nina Crummy, for example, noted analogous patterns of stylistic and distributional differences in RB nail-cleaner strap-ends compared to ones found in Germany and France.⁴⁰ What is more, they also highlight clear regional types of nail-cleaners that show evidence of mirroring lingering LPRIA socio-cultural boundaries and pathways of material consumption.⁴¹ For Eckardt and Crummy, RB nail-cleaners are tools through which we can observe how local responses to the empire produced regionally specific material styles and types that enabled individuals to express aspects of their identity in Roman Britain.⁴² RB face pots, too, exhibit such regional-specificity in their typology⁴³, yet contrary to the nail-cleaners the level of contextual diversification observed among RB face pots is unique across the broader spectrum of Roman face pots as a whole. What is it about these pots within British contexts that invited such a distinct pattern of diversification?

³⁸ The exception to this appears to be Wales, in which face pots are rare to non-existent. Braithwaite (2007, 335-6) attributes this lack of Welsh face pots to the presence of the Legio II Augusta, which she theorizes may never have come into contact with face pot traditions before arriving in Britain, originating as it did in Spain. Such a lack of Welsh face pots may also be indicative of differing inter-regional material preferences in Roman Britain, and reflect more LPRIA -based distributional patterns à la Eckardt and Crummy (2006).

³⁹ Braithwaite 2007, 237-8, 344.

⁴⁰ Eckardt and Crummy 2006, 83. See also Crummy and Eckardt 2003.

⁴¹ Eckardt and Crummy 2003, 49.

⁴² Eckardt and Crummy 2006.

⁴³ See Braithwaite 2007, 237-314 for the full typology of RB face pots.

[Interpretive Hurdles: Imprecise Data and Small Sample Sizes]

Before we turn to the pots directly, a few methodological issues must be addressed. As a whole, face pots are a rare type of pottery, representing perhaps only 1% or 2% of all ceramic finds on any given site in the Rhineland and across Britain.⁴⁴ Furthermore, a sizeable quantity of the face pots currently published were excavated prior to 1940 and lack detailed provenience records, further complicating an already small sample size. While most of the whole vessels from earlier excavations can reasonably be attributed to funerary contexts due to the nature of their preservation, it is more difficult to ascribe definitive contexts to many sherds. This holds especially true for face pot sherds that bare no traces of their face.

Within studies of site-wide assemblages, the RB face pots are typically catalogued as either oxidized wares, coarse wares, or buff wares, and possess fabrics with common to abundant inclusions⁴⁵. In comparing the shapes of face pots to similar classes of vessels, there do not appear to be any clear correlations to any one type of RB pottery.⁴⁶ To my knowledge, the only exception to this pattern is one mid-first to early second century face pot that was excavated from a funerary context at Colchester. This vessel, RB.DV 7⁴⁷, takes the shape of a so-called ‘honeypot’, but even this form is noted as being unusual (see Appendix I, figure 1).⁴⁸ Otherwise, face pots are rather generic subsets of various, globular regional types, occasionally taking on

⁴⁴ Braithwaite 2007, 329.

⁴⁵ See Tomber and Dore 1998, 6-8 for RB fabric description references.

⁴⁶ For comparative images of face pots and other vessel forms see Davies et al. 1994, esp. 43-7 and 56-7 for examples from London.

⁴⁷ Colchester and Ipswich Museums, Collections Archive COLEM: 1928.363.1. GB 13B (Braithwaite 2007, 260). It is unsurprising that this vessel falls within the conquest period of Roman-Britain, as it is stylistically unparalleled by any other vessels before or after it. The conquest period is noted as having, perhaps, the most diverse collection of face pots, the stylistic formulae for which become increasingly patterned into the second and third centuries.

⁴⁸ Davies et al. 1994, 47.

characteristics seen in other classes of vessels – e.g. frilled rims, incised rings around the body – but rarely if ever adhering to any one definable shape. Thus, a sherd with no diagnostic facial fragments is easily lost among the large quantities of regional coarse or buff wares that become the detritus of so many excavations. Further confounding matters is the lack of a standard face pot form, shape, or size.

One might think that perhaps the faces themselves could offer an identification solution, however, they offer little help in determining face pot size or form. It is near impossible to estimate the overall size of a face pot before breakage from a face sherd alone, even if one makes a reasonable approximation of the size of the face. As graph 3 (see Appendix II) illustrates, there is no direct relation between the surface area of the face and the total surface area of the pot's entire body. RB.DV 7 (Appendix I, figure 1), for example, the largest whole vessel measured for this study, has a face comparable in size to another vessel with nearly half its total surface area, RB.DV 2 (Appendix I, figure 2).

The second main problem is that visually identifiable traces of tasks for which a face pot may have been used have a high chance of not appearing on diagnostic sherds. Cooking, for example, would leave burn and scorch marks on a pot, but likely nowhere high enough on the vessel for the evidence to be visible on or near the face or rim. An organic-residue analysis may prove useful in helping to determine what certain vessels may have once contained, but such a study has yet to be conducted.

Despite these difficulties, there do still exist fragments and even a few whole vessels that can be attributed to contexts and uses that speak directly to the diversification of RB face pots.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See Merrifield 1995, 36-8, for two London examples of ritually deposited face pots (RB.DV 2 and RB.DV 4).

Fragmentary examples recently (post-2015) excavated in Cambridgeshire and London, for instance, are recorded as coming from ritual contexts (foundation deposits, wells and shafts), and from sites with no previous military connections and no evidence of face pot use for burial purposes.⁵⁰

[Technical Analysis: Functionality and Practicality]

To understand how and why face pots were used, it is important to first understand how useable they were as vessels. To carry out this assessment, I chose a selection of complete pots from among various museum collections in Britain. Vessels were selected for the following criteria: their state as either whole or entirely reconstructed⁵¹; representative of an array of morphological types; displaying a range in size and therefore volume capacities. Measurements taken of the vessels include: height, diameter of the vessel at its greatest extent, diameter of the vessel's opening, number of handles, volume capacity in light-weight plastic pellets⁵², and weight both when empty and full. I recorded my personal observations on handling the vessels, evaluating their 'user-friendliness'. Particular attention was paid to how easy it was to handle the vessels while empty and while full, with emphasis placed on the form, size, weight, and placement of each vessel's handles and face. For the complete list of the data recorded, see Appendix II, table 3.

⁵⁰ Courtesy of Eniko Hudak, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (personal communication, 2018).

⁵¹ While selecting to conduct an analysis with whole vessels alone does allow for a certain amount of quantitative consistency in taking certain measurements (volume, in particular), due to the nature of how things tend to be preserved, the majority of the vessels studied came from funerary contexts. In order to better diversify the vessels studied, a collection of identifiable face pot sherds and fragments were also studied, courtesy of the Museum of London's Archaeological Archives.

⁵² 1 cup of light-weight Victory pellets equaled 5oz, or 230 ml equaled 142g.

RB face pots vary in style, size, and iconography, and can possess anywhere from zero to three handles. They can range in height from 11 to 35 centimeters and in width from 11 to 31 centimeters, resulting in rather boxy vessels (see Appendix II, graph 4). Though each pot is a unique creation as the faces are hand-made and applied to wheel-thrown bodies⁵³, there is a set of features shared by many vessels. “Sliced-mushroom-shaped, downward-drooping eyebrows” paired with a “wedge nose” is a motif that becomes emblematic of the RB face-pots, particularly in the late first to third centuries CE.⁵⁴ Many pots display frilled rims⁵⁵, incised grooves around the neck or girth, and, more rarely, additional ornamentation such as horns, spouts, or even glass pressed into the eyes⁵⁶. Certain adornments popular on continental vessels, such as beards and large protruding noses, occur much less frequently on British vessels, while others, such as phalli, do not appear at all.⁵⁷ All face pots have exactly one face adorning the outside of the vessel, which can rest anywhere from just under the rim of the vessel to the midpoint of the pot’s total height. The size of the faces varies from pot to pot, taking up between 3.32% and 15.08% of the vessel’s total surface area.⁵⁸ In general, RB face pots are thick-walled, globular in shape, and, most importantly, possess small handles compared to their overall size. These criteria, coupled with the relative weights of each pot, culminate in a few notable observations.

First, the face pots are functionally limited as the user is not able to comfortably grasp a vessel with their entire hand. On average the handles possess small diameters and narrow

⁵³ Braithwaite 2007, 351.

⁵⁴ Braithwaite 1984, 103. These facial motif formulae are also apparent on continental pots in Rhineland, but do not appear as frequently, nor are they as widespread as they are in Britain.

⁵⁵ Braithwaite (2007, 385) takes this feature as a general sign that the pots were utilized for ritual rites, but I find that to be a rather generalizing conclusion, especially considering the lack of a definition for what constitutes ‘ritual’ in Braithwaite’s work.

⁵⁶ Braithwaite 1984, 103.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ See Appendix II, table 3.

openings, making it possible to hold a vessel with at most three, possibly four fingers (see Appendix I, figure 3 for an example of a handle only one-finger's width in size)⁵⁹. My own hand measures 7 cm between the outermost edges of my pointer and pinky fingers and 17.6 cm from the base of my palm to the tip of my middle finger. Across all the pots studied, I was only able to comfortably fit about 3 fingers on average through the handles, and only ever 4 with a certain amount of discomfort. When one factors in a vessel's weight, the ease of using the pots decreases even further. Vessel RB.DV 3⁶⁰, for example, measures 29.5 cm in height, 26.2 cm in diameter at its greatest extent, and weighs 2300.1 g (see Appendix I, figures 4-6). Filled with light-weight Victory brand plastic pellets, however, the vessel weighs 3532 g. While this particular vessel possesses larger than average handles compared to other face pots, the most stable method for holding the vessel securely is by gripping the sides rather than attempting to use the handles when it is full. The small size of the handles prohibits the user from forming a solid enough grip on the vessel to engage in an upending or pouring motion. This observation holds true for all the face pots listed in Appendix II.⁶¹

The placement of the handles, too, further complicates the use of these vessels. In cases of three-handled face pots, two handles rest on either side of the face, while the third handle is situated directly opposite the face on the back of the vessel. The back handle is virtually unusable as there is no reciprocating handle opposite it and holding these vessels by one handle alone is simply not feasible. The two side handles are similarly difficult to use as the intervals at which the handles are placed favor the side with the face, forcing the user to reach further around

⁵⁹ cf. RB.DV 3, Appendix I, figure 4. This vessel's handles could fit three fingers.

⁶⁰ Museum of London, Roman London Collection, 73.68. GB 13D (Braithwaite 2007, 261).

⁶¹ Perhaps the only exception to this statement among the vessels studied is RB.DV 4 from the Museum of London (Appendix I, figure 7). This particular vessel is, to the knowledge of the author, the smallest whole vessel on record, measuring barely even half the height of the next shortest pot. This particular vessel, however, is still subject to the same observations made regarding handle size and placement as the other vessels in this study.

to the front of the vessel in order to grab them (see Appendix I, figure 6). The ease with which these vessels are used and held is further complicated by the physical obstruction of the back handle and the awareness the user must have of which way the face is directed. Such a handle configuration could speak in favor of these vessels being hung, however, the handles of the non-funerary vessels studied, both whole and fragmentary, show no signs of wear from any kind of hanging apparatus. Although, it is perfectly plausible that hanging materials could have been composed of perishable substance that would not have left easily visible marks of wear. Thus, hanging face pots are a possibility that cannot be (dis)proven on current evidence.

It is not unreasonable to posit that face pots without handles would hold a functional advantage over their handled counterparts, but even without handles these vessels remain limited in the range of tasks they are suited to. A faceless, handle-less pot could theoretically be held between two hands in any manner by the sides. A handle-less face pot, however, is much more limiting as the face restricts the area on the vessel's body from which it may be grasped. One could argue that perhaps the facial features might have provided additional grip for the user, particularly on handleless face pots, but it strikes me as odd that one would want to cover or obstruct the very traits that represent the character of these pots and set them apart from other contemporaneous vessels.

I have established that face pots were not particularly easy but also not impossible to handle: they did not provide an easy grip for the human hand, and the protruding face was emphatically present. Yet, what does it mean to define a vessel as functional or even practical? First and foremost, notions of what constitute functionality and practicality must be understood as relational, and contextually derived. What may seem functional or practical to one individual

or within one socio-cultural context, may seem completely useless and impractical to others.⁶² Furthermore, both functionality and practicality are ever-changing qualities perceived by a user about an object that must be assessed on a case-by-case or task-by-task basis, and must also take into consideration the technical and physical capabilities of both the object and its socially embedded user⁶³. The ability to hold and retain materials and substances is crucial to a vessel's being deemed functional, and to its identity as a container⁶⁴, yet not all vessels are practically suited to the same tasks. What any one particular vessel can afford its user is based on the morphological characteristics of said vessel and its particular context of use.

What do I mean by this? Let us consider tea kettles. A standard tea kettle with a wide-mouthed spout is functionally capable of dispensing hot water into a pour-over coffee carafe but is not entirely practical as the wide spout offers little control in maintaining an accurate flow of water. A goosenecked kettle, however, is both functional and practical for such a task in that it is capable of pouring out hot water, while also offering an optimal amount of control and accuracy of the water's flow due to its narrow neck and spout. What this example showcases is how two different objects intended for the same purpose – i.e. containing and pouring water – can both accomplish the same basic task, albeit one more practically than the other due to its inherent morphological traits.

Similar arguments apply to ceramic vessels. When a certain vessel or class of vessels is used for functions other than what it was originally intended for they do not always retain the

⁶² Brück 2005, 55.

⁶³ Gibson 1979, 127-8. Contra to the earliest phenomenological approaches to experiencing ancient materials and landscapes (Tilley 1994, 2004), many scholars have asserted the need to socially contextualize archaeological interpretations of the body, emphasizing that there is no universal experience of the human body. See Meskell 1996, 1997; Fowler 2004; Brück 2005; Joyce 2005.

⁶⁴ Knappett and Malafouris 2010.

same criteria of optimal functionality for the new task. Work on the part of the user is thus required to conceptually recategorize the object to embody the necessary minimum characteristics required to make them suitable alternatives for their new set of tasks. Vessels originally intended for graves, for instance, are not always functionally suited for tasks that require extended handling as they are often designed with criteria that make prolonged or frequent use impractical (i.e. thick walls; odd number, small size, and awkward placement of handles). Instead, such vessels need only be capable of carrying out the necessary mechanical capabilities of performance inherent to ceramic containers⁶⁵: containment.

I want to be clear. This is in no way meant to imply that funerary vessels are purely single-use objects that must be forcefully recategorized in the minds of users when they are employed in tasks for which they are not first designed. Rather, the argument is meant to highlight a certain morphological phenomenon observed among RB face pots in that traits from an original context of use (i.e. funerary use in the Rhineland) are retained in new contexts of diversified use (i.e. domestic, votive, etc. in Britain).⁶⁶ These vessels may be understood as functional in that they still are able to accomplish the tasks of containment for which vessels are predisposed⁶⁷, but they are not practical in that their design does not alter to accommodate their expanded realm of uses. Thus, a fossilization of sorts is observed, in that the form for the tasks which face pots are originally designed to perform does not give way to morphological changes that would better reflect the diversification of their consumption contexts. In the face pots, this means traits that are better suited to single-use grave contexts seen in the Rhineland and at the outset of the Roman invasions of Britain persevere (small and odd numbered handles, thick

⁶⁵ Braun 1983, 108.

⁶⁶ There is no evidence that face pots used in funerary contexts in the Rhineland were used for other tasks prior to their deposition, however, an organic residue analysis would prove fruitful for such an inquiry.

⁶⁷ Knappett and Malafouris 2010.

walls), rather than transform to suit the multi-use contexts that many face pots in Roman Britain are later excavated from. A reasonable expectation would be to observe a reciprocal increase in handle size and decrease in weight (re: wall thickness), and therefore functionality and practicality, as the face pots become more widely used for tasks befitting their new range of depositional contexts; e.g. storing, carrying, pouring, perhaps even cooking. The face pots resist any such evolutionary assumptions⁶⁸, however, retaining their small handles and a limited range of capabilities. One plausible model of material development may argue that changes in objects over time should follow trends of increased efficiency, however, this line of thinking is very much in tune with modern Western demands on objects to always be the most efficient version of themselves. The fossilization of the face pots' morphology works against such assertions, bringing forth instead more sensory and affective impetuses behind material evolutions.

[What's in a Face?: Identity and RB Face Pots]

While the RB face pots fossilize in their style and general form, they do develop changes and 'evolve' iconographically, displaying altered facial and decorative characteristics inter-provincially, and even inter-regionally within Britain. Although the formula of what constitutes a face pot remains the same – small handles, globular body, abstract human face on one side, etc. – the variables required to construct said formula find ways to remain socio-culturally salient when introduced to new populations of consumers and their contextual needs. In this regard, RB face pots are an illuminating example of a global cultural concept⁶⁹ utilized and recontextualized for a

⁶⁸ See Lyman and O'Brien 2006, 699 for a stricter model of evolutionary change in material culture that expects changes in phenotypic traits of objects through time and across populations.

⁶⁹ Versluys 2015, 156.

diverse array of local purposes and populations⁷⁰. The limiting morphology and the anthropomorphic face of the vessels are what establish their identity as “Roman face pots,” yet combined with the contexts of use specific to Britain is what creates the Romano-British face pot specifically. What is more, despite their transformations, both morphological and conceptual (on the part of the user), they also retain all the necessary components required to maintain their socio-cultural value as subjects rather than just as objects “representative of a culture”⁷¹. In thinking specifically about the body and these vessels’ human features, we can begin to tease out differing contextual responses to the face pots and how their unique use of anthropomorphic iconography speaks to local conceptualizations of what the human form is and what it can do.

Much of what comprises the identity of RB face pots is, of course, their striking, abstract anthropomorphic faces. Other classes of vessels share in the iconographic program of the RB face pots, yet they do not possess quite the same realm of diverse possibilities. Neck flagons, for example, are rounded vessels with long, constricted necks that display a mould-made face at the top. Neck flagons are on average much smaller than face pots, handle-less, and fit comfortably between two hands or cradled in one. It must also be noted that the faces of neck flagons are much more realistic than the abstract forms seen on the RB face pots (see Appendix I, figures 8-9). Such vessels are more attuned to pouring or storing, as the thin neck allows control over the dispensing of contents and also makes it easier to seal off the opening of the vessel.

Neck flagons, though perhaps more practical for some tasks, are not capable of all that a face pot is. For one, the flagons are easy to handle and exactly the type of vessels that invite a second-nature ease-of-use on the part of the user; there is not a lot of mental work that goes into

⁷⁰ Eckardt 2014, 210.

⁷¹ Versluys 2015, 159 for the phrase.

engaging with these vessels. The obtrusive nature of the face pots, however, brings in the conscious awareness of the user and an entirely new level of interaction unique to these vessels. By virtue of their design, the face pots force a physical awareness upon their user, demanding the extra considerations and reactions one cannot help but experience in handling them. As a result, there is a constant mindfulness of how the pot is being held, how it is engaged with and by the user and any audiences in its social context; how it is being viewed and what their place within social rites and rituals would have been.

Warnier's approach to material culture engagement – self-dubbed 'sensori-affectivo-motor-conducts geared towards material culture' – offers a productive approach to this discussion.⁷² For Warnier, the ways in which we interact with materials and how materials interact with us are all dependent upon the physical sensibilities and capabilities of the human body, be they learned or inherent. Such notions are not unlike Mauss' *techniques du corps*⁷³, but Warnier takes the argument further, adding that our physical conducts require corresponding drive and emotions⁷⁴. He goes on to posit that ideas of the body and of vessels are very closely linked, asserting that the skin and the clay afford the same acts of containment, providing loci in which techniques of the self are formed and performed.⁷⁵ Thus, in creating and caring for vessels, the surface – the vessel's skin, as it were – is treated with great care, often nicely decorated, glazed, or smoothed. The reasoning for doing so, Warnier argues, is two-fold. One, because certain surface treatments add a layer of protection or adornment to the vessel (amour), and two, because in altering the exterior of the vessel one is able to "enhance the emotional dimension of its sensori-motor manipulation," granting it a level of style that acts as both a

⁷² Warnier 2001; 2006.

⁷³ Mauss 1935.

⁷⁴ Warnier 2006, 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4-5, 7, 11.

means of identification and iconography-induced satisfaction.⁷⁶ Thus, by Warnier's logic, face pots carry within their specific composition of medium (clay) and iconography (face) the potential of acting as human proxies, becoming agents in their own right through the careful considerations of how they must be handled (re: engaged with) and how they greet (re: engage with) their social contexts.

If we consider the vessel as an active agent in its own right—engaging in its use just as much as it is being engaged—then the idea of the face and its iconography gains more weight. It is crucial, however, that we understand the contextual variance with which objects possess agency. Agency is not a clear-cut concept, nor can it be generalized into a cross-culturally collective idea. Concerns of how materials exhibit agency themselves have spurred much debate⁷⁷, but for RB face pots agency will be understood as resulting from the relationship they form with their users through their active engagement within social contexts and rituals.

This is where the face becomes especially important. Neck flagons possess more well-defined, 'realistic' anthropomorphic faces which is exactly what limits the realm of possible interpretations one might form about them. RB face pots possess more abstract and mostly gender-neutral facial iconography that challenges personalized and engendered readings.⁷⁸ As the RB 'serene' style solidifies in the second century, there is a decrease in beards and other typically gendered images, and the generally neutral face with slit to almost closed eyes and partially open mouths appears across multiple regions of Britain. It may very well be that such

⁷⁶ Ibid, 11. See also Norman 2013, 5, 49-50,5 on how design of objects relates to different levels of human perception and reaction, both cognitively and emotionally.

⁷⁷ Notably see: Ingold 2007; Knappett 2007; Tilley 2007.

⁷⁸ A few select RB face pots do, in fact, display certain identifying characteristics such as Pan horns or smith's tools, but these are rare among an already rare type of ceramic, with only a handful of identifiable examples coming from all of Britain (see Braithwaite 2007, 365 and 370-1). There are also vessels among the British variants that display beards but equating such a phenotypic feature to a male identity is not only essentializing, but also ascribes to modern binaries of sex and gender expressions.

gender-neutral yet still enlivened appearances are exactly what invited alternative reactions to these vessels in Roman Britain, and incited the diversification of their use. RB face pots are sketches, pliant to the interpretations of the viewer, while vessels like neck flagons are essentially a finished drawing, their identity and form already distinct.

The physical reality of having a face is a universal concept, although the ways in which the face—and the body as a whole—are experienced and understood are not.⁷⁹ At the same time, however, certain aspects and characteristics of the human form can be deemed universal. Face pots, by nature, possess and display the most important bodily requirements for social interaction – that is, human perception and communication organs: eyes, mouth, ears, nose. As Erving Goffman has pointed out, these components that make up the human visage – with the expressive addition of eyebrows – are integral to the ways in which we construct our ‘face’, or our images as determined by social attributes and values.⁸⁰ It is through the face that we produce the self which we socially enact and engage with in the rituals demanded by our societal contexts. In this way, the facial features of these vessels actively broadcast the object’s acceptable range and proper manner of use and engagement⁸¹ by denoting that it is capable of social interaction, of ‘giving face’.

Let us consider the above in the context of an RB face pot. Pot RB.DV2⁸² (see Appendix I, figures 2) is a mid-second century vessel from the Guildhall site in the city of London⁸³. The vessel measures 22 cm in height, 21.3 cm in diameter at its greatest extent, and weighs 1322.6 g

⁷⁹ Fowler 2004, 38.

⁸⁰ Goffman 1967.

⁸¹ Norman 2013, 13-20.

⁸² Davies et al. 1994, 46 and 237 (NB: item 183). See also Braithwaite 2007, 261-4 GB Type 13D.

⁸³ Records courtesy of the Museum of London curation staffs and the London Archaeological Archive Online Catalogue (Site Record GM216).

while empty. The face of RB.DV 2 is a typical ‘serene’ RB face, matching to GB type 13D⁸⁴. This vessel also only has two handles, more practically situated directly across from one another compared to its three-handled counterparts.⁸⁵ RB.DV 2 was excavated from a rubbish pit with other ceramic fragments which makes it difficult to ascertain with any certainty the exact function of the pot pre-deposition, however, the accompanying fragment of human cranium on a site with otherwise no evidence of burials is rather telling.⁸⁶

RB.DV 2, like all other RB face pots, has everything required to be regarded and interacted with as an active agent within RB social contexts: the face as the focal point for social contact. Though the handle placements are more practical than some other RB face pots, the size of them still results in a limited practicality and puts onto the user conscious awareness of the tactile engagement necessary for use of and interaction with this vessel. The facial features of RB.DV 2 almost depict the visage of a person at rest, hinting at a certain calmness with which this vessel takes in its surroundings. Were the pot engaged in some cranial related ritual or cultic activity, the face’s serene façade could be enacted as a proxy participant allowing the user to still give a ‘good face’⁸⁷ while participating in these rites. If we also think on the continued use and re-use of such vessels for repeated cultic activity, the face further transcends from the state of being simply a stand-in to the realm of active participation. A face pot placed and left in a shrine after a ritual has concluded becomes not just a material offering, but a vigilant guard, remaining on watch and continuing the act of engagement with the gods or spirits of the shrine long after the human agent has left. In instances where the same vessel is engaged in the same ritual on

⁸⁴ Braithwaite 2007, 261-4.

⁸⁵ See Appendix I, figure 3 (cf. figure 6).

⁸⁶ Jonathan Cotton (1996, 89) suggest an enduring Celtic head cult as possible one fact behind the ready adoption of RB face pots among RB populations. Cotton argues for a *pars pro toto* symbology for the face pots, in which the face and assumed head is meant to represent the entire human form in a substitutive manner.

⁸⁷ Goffman 1967.

repeat occasions, the static nature of the facial features become something the consumer can count on, offering them a reliable relationship in which the face is called upon by the user like a trusted companion to perform together with them. The face pot thus enables the user the ability to put forth a consistent expression under the scrutiny of the gods, and facilitates for them a new range of emotional engagements in social and ritual activities.

The same approach could also apply to RB.DV 4⁸⁸, a mid-second century CE vessel from London, measuring 11.6 cm in height. This vessel was excavated from a ritual deposit near a streambed close to the River Thames.⁸⁹ While its final context of use was a purposeful deposition, it is easy to imagine that prior to this RB.DV 4 was similarly engaged in ritual activity akin to that discussed for RB.DV 2. Due to the small size of this vessel, one could argue that perhaps this particular face pot was meant for a young user; a child just learning the proper rites and rituals of their cultural milieu who might require a steady stand-in to ensure they give good face. At the risk of falling into modern notions and stereotypes concerning divides between that which is considered ‘adult’ and ‘childish’, I would also propose that the size of RB.DV 4 may be more connected to what it contained—a small amount of a precious material or substance—rather than the age or size of the individual by whom it was used.

Replacing or substituting the human form for a ceramic one is not without precedence. Ceramic urns, especially those face pots used as such, are prime examples of such a phenomenon. The face pot, as a representation of that which has been lost or is gone (a cremated body or the absent worshiper) is engaged as a symbolic replacement for something perishable or transient (the human body), offering a new permanent space for identity; an immortal body with

⁸⁸ See Appendix I, figure 7; Appendix II, table 3.

⁸⁹ Merrifield 1995, 36-8.

similar functions of containment.⁹⁰ The pot becomes not just a representation of the human form, but a viable substitute with the same capabilities of containment and of participation in important cultural rites and rituals. This particular vessel's morphological composition is in line with the technical observations made above, ensuring that the user is constantly aware of the way in which the vessel must be held and interacted with; this is not entirely unlike how we must be similarly cognizant of other people and their bodily presence within social scenarios. Coupled with the sensory symbols of human interaction (i.e. eyes, mouth, ears), the vessel transcends the boundary from artefact of social engagement to enlivened agent.

Through the manners of use detailed above, RB face pots offer more diverse possibilities than their continental counterparts. Whether they are providing a wider range of emotional capabilities within ritual contexts, offering an ideological extension of the human form after death, or simply appealing to varying regional aesthetic tastes, RB face pots are prime examples of how so-called 'global' goods are reinterpreted and applied to local needs. What were once viewed as oddities among RB ceramics are now better understood to be rather versatile goods, expanding and reshaping our ideas of how and why RB peoples engaged with certain materials. They are no longer evidence of the heavy-hand of Rome reaching into and changing British lives from the 'top down', but rather dialectic tools utilized in a diverse array of ways by diverse populations.

⁹⁰ Belting 2011, 85. Knappett et al. 2010.

[Conclusion]

This paper has reviewed the distribution patterns and contexts of RB face pots as first discussed by Braithwaite (1984, 2007), and added an alternative consumption-based approach to understanding these vessels. It has been shown that the RB face pots were not the most functional or practical vessels—a topic previously uninvestigated—and that their utilization in diverse non-military, local RB contexts warrants further attention in order to parse out their salience to RB populations. By the mid-second century CE, face pots in Roman Britain existed as neither wholly Roman nor British, but something uniquely Romano-British that was indicative of decisions on the part of RB consumers in the display and performance of their identity. By engaging with the face pots as active agents, capable of engaging in social rites and rituals just as much as they are engaged with, RB consumers were able to utilize these vessels as proxy participants or even bodily substitutions. The enlivened facial features of these vessels in conjunction with their morphological configurations that demanded careful handling and attention on the part of the user, culminated in the vessels capabilities to enact the same technologies of social interaction as their users. Questions still remain about other manners in which the face pots might have been utilized—as hanging vessels, cooking, storing, etc.—but such lines of inquiry will greatly benefit from both the continuation of well-documented excavations of RB sites, and future studies utilizing methods such as organic residue analysis.

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Appendix I: Images



Figure 1: RB.DV 7. This face pot dates to the mid-first early second century CE and takes the form of a 'honey pot'. Currently housed at the Colchester and Ipswich Museums, Roman pottery collection, COLEM:1928.363.1. Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.

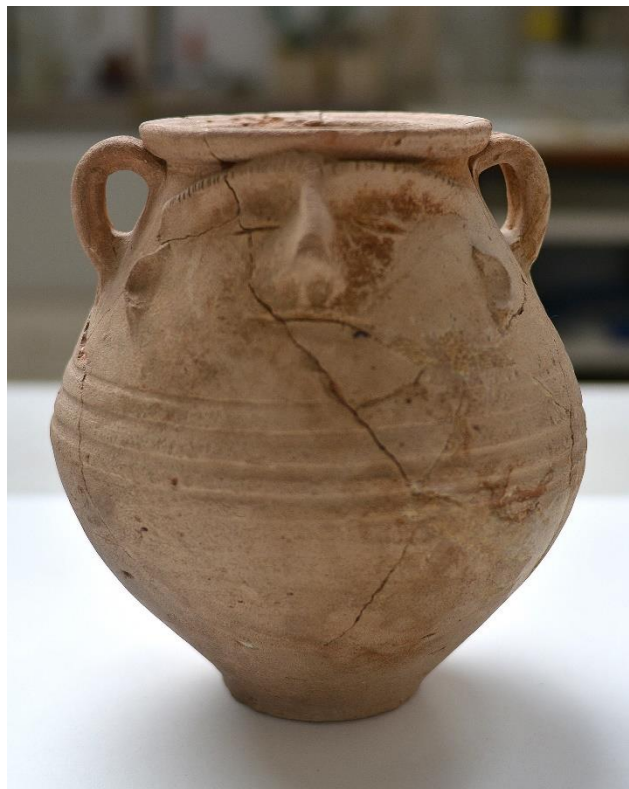


Figure 2: RB.DV 2. This face pot dates to the mid-2nd century CE; currently housed at the Museum of London, Roman London Collection, 18302. Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.



Figure 3: Fragment of a RB face pot from the Threadneedle Street area of London. Date is only recorded as Roman. Museum of London Archaeological Archives, 14.874. This particular vessel's handles only allow for about one adult-sized finger to fit through the open space.
Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018



Figure 4: RB.DV 3. This face pot dates to the mid-2nd century CE; currently housed at the Museum of London, Roman London Collection, 73.68.
Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.



Figure 5: Back view of vessel RB.DV 3, displaying how one handle lies directly across from the face on the front of the pot.

Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.



Figure 6: Top view of vessel RB.DV 3, showing the 1/3 distribution of the vessel's handles.

Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.



Figure 7: RB.DV 4. This vessel dates to the mid-2nd century CE; currently at the Museum of London, Roman London Collection, A1739. This vessel only measures 11.6 cm tall and is the smallest known RB face pot to date.
Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.

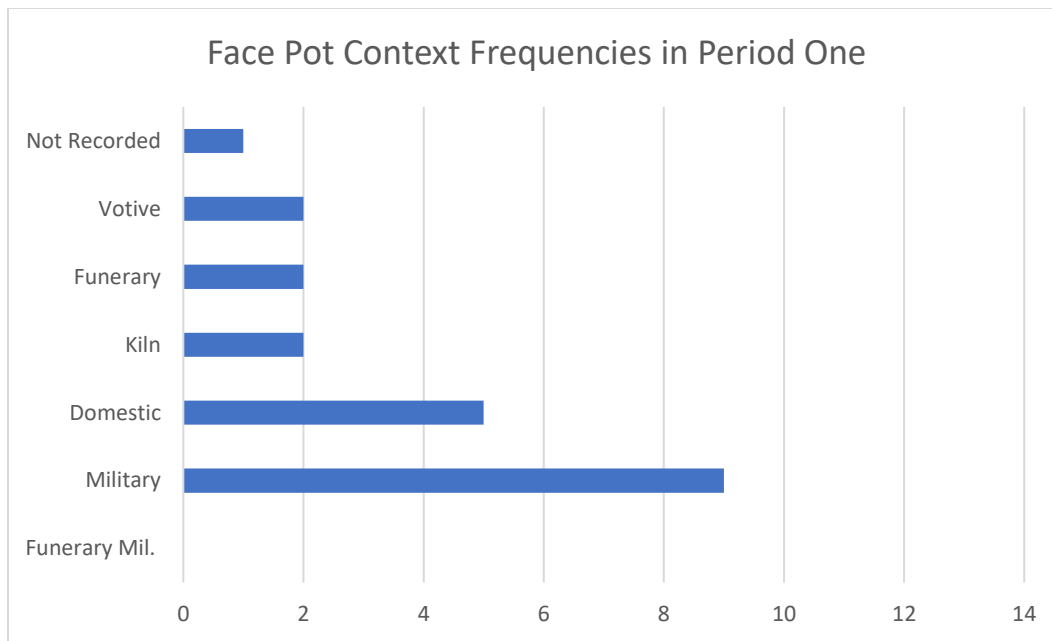


Figure 8: A neck flagon of mid-third century CE date. British Museum Reserves, 1883.1213.355.
Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.

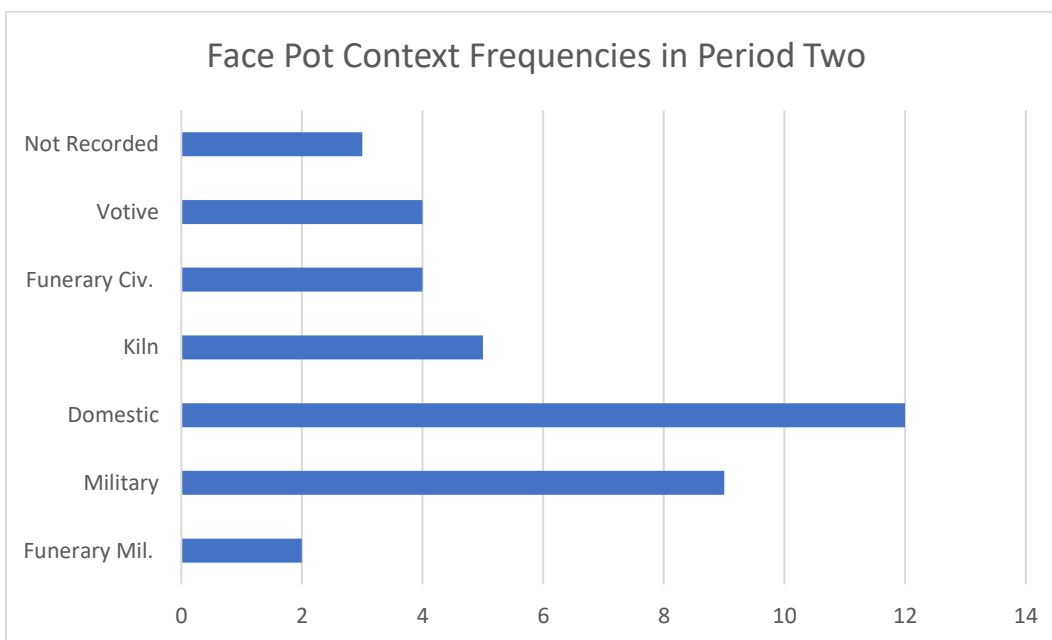


Figure 9: Detail of neck flagon face. British Museum Reserves, 1883.1213.355.
Photo: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.

Appendix II: Graphs, Maps, and Tables



Graph 1. Frequency of RB face pot find contexts across 32 British sites during period one, 43-84 CE.



Graph 2. Frequency of RB face pot find contexts across 32 British sites during period two, the later first to early third centuries CE.

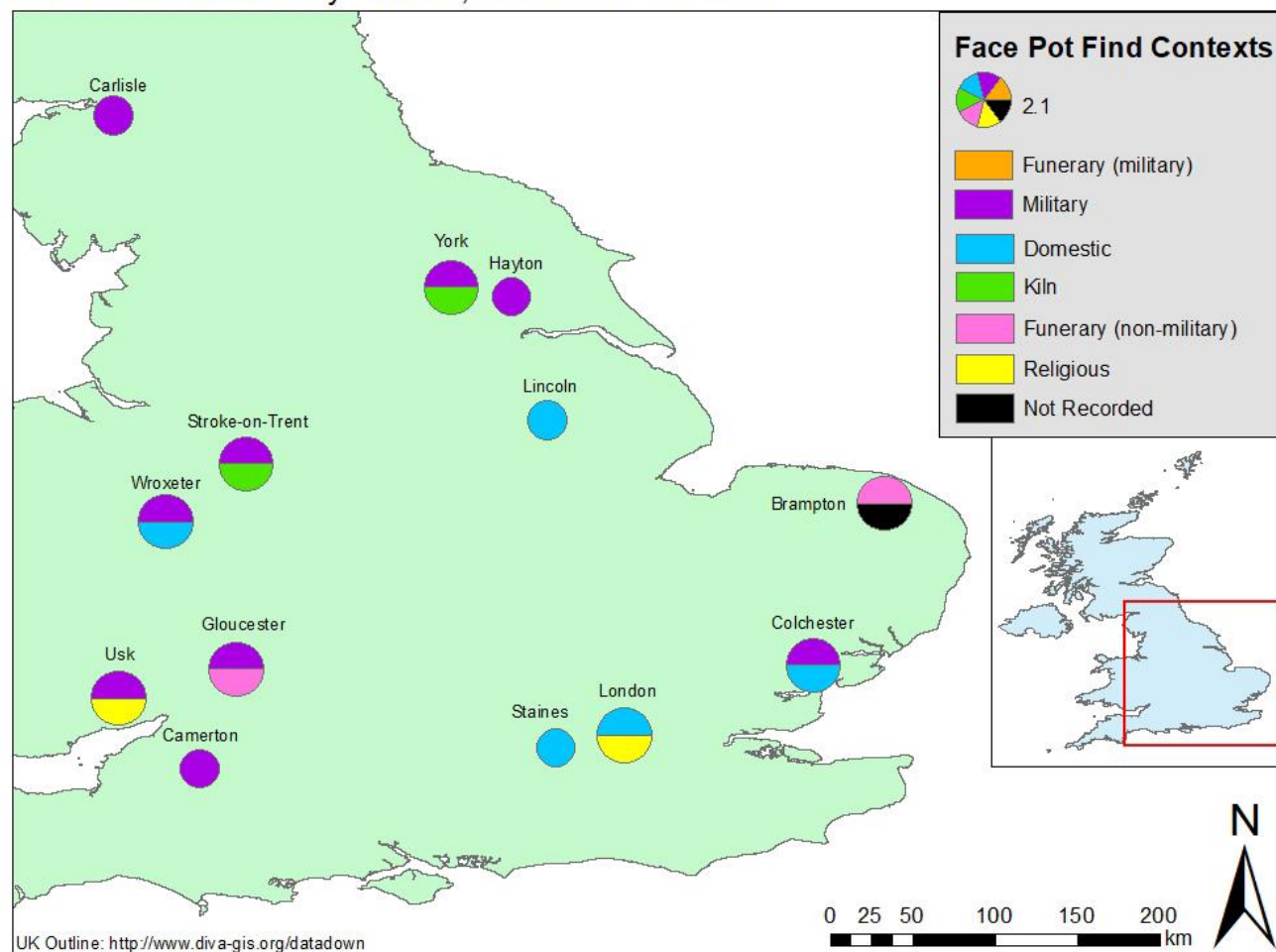
Location	Funerary Military	Military	Domestic	Kiln	Funerary	Votive	Not Recorded
London	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Colchester	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Baldock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brampton	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Billericay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bodiam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camerton	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Carlisle	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Caistor-by-Norwich	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caerwent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caistor-on-Sea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dover	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elms Farm, Heybridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staines	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Gloucester	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Usk	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Wroxeter	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
York	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hayton	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Holme on Spalding Moor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trent Vale (Stroke on Trent)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Verulamium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little Chester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Welwyn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Towcester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Springhead	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Old Penrith	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camelon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Studdal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	9	5	2	2	2	1

Table 1. Corresponding frequency numbers to graph 1 of context types represented at 32 RB sites during Period One.

Location	Funerary Military	Military	Domestic	Kiln	Funerary Civ.	Votive	Not Recorded
London	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
Colchester	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Baldock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brampton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Billericay	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Bodiam	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Camerton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carlisle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caistor-by-Norwich	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Canterbury	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Caerwent	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Caistor-on-Sea	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Dover	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Enfield	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Elms Farm, Heybridge	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Staines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gloucester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Usk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wroxeter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
York	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hayton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holme on Spalding Moor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trent Vale (Stroke on Trent)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Verulamium	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Little Chester	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Welwyn	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Towcester	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Springhead	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Old Penrith	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Camelon	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
East Studdal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	2	9	12	5	4	4	3

Table 2. Corresponding frequency numbers to graph 2 of context types represented at 32 RB sites during Period Two.

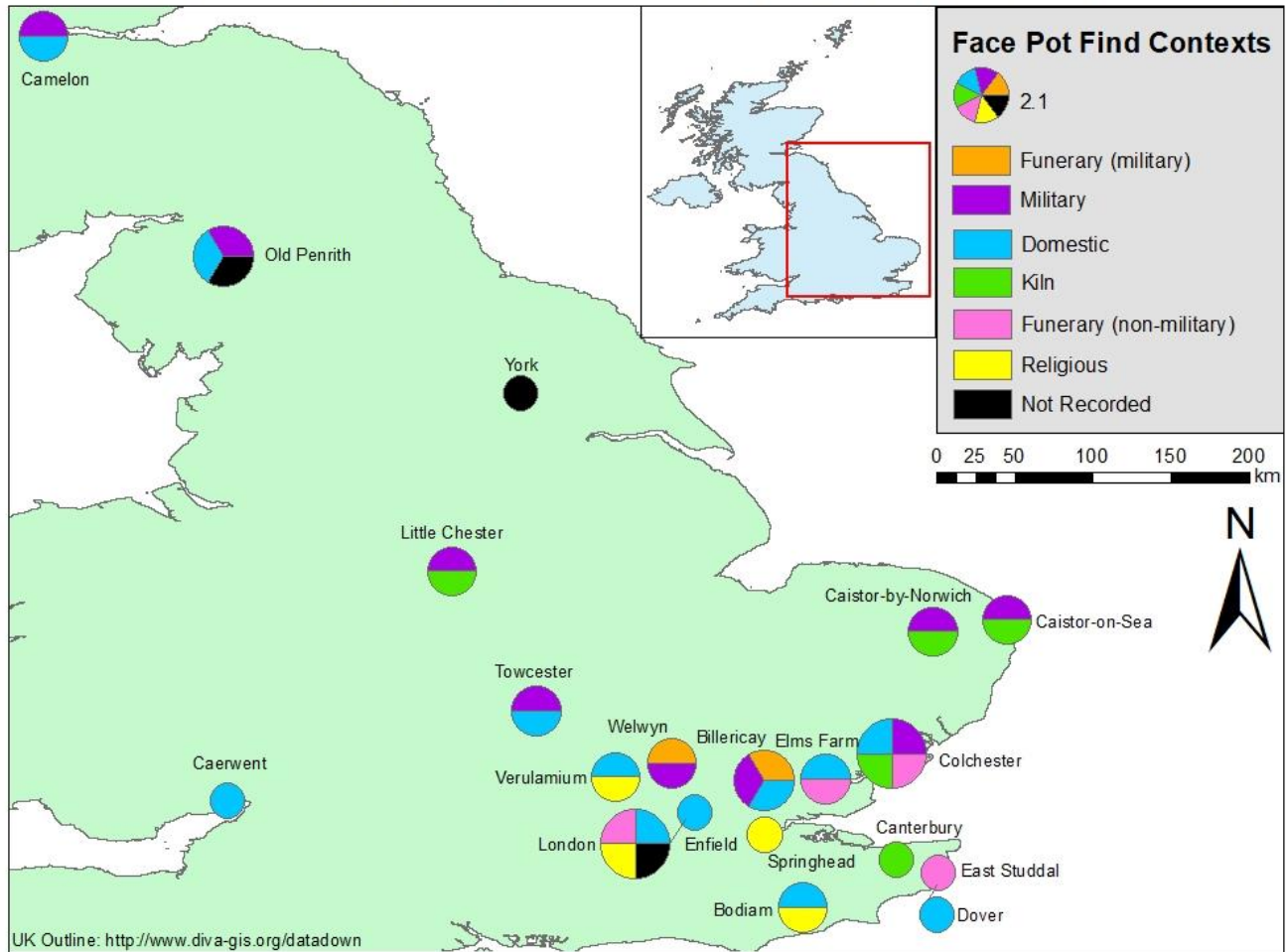
Face Pot Distribution by Context, Period One: 43-84 CE



Map 1: RB Face pot contextual distributions during the conquest period at: Carlisle, York, Hayton, Lincoln, Stroke-on-Trent, Wroxeter, Usk, Gloucester, Camerton, Staines, London, Colchester, and Brampton. Period One timeframe after Braithwaite 2007.

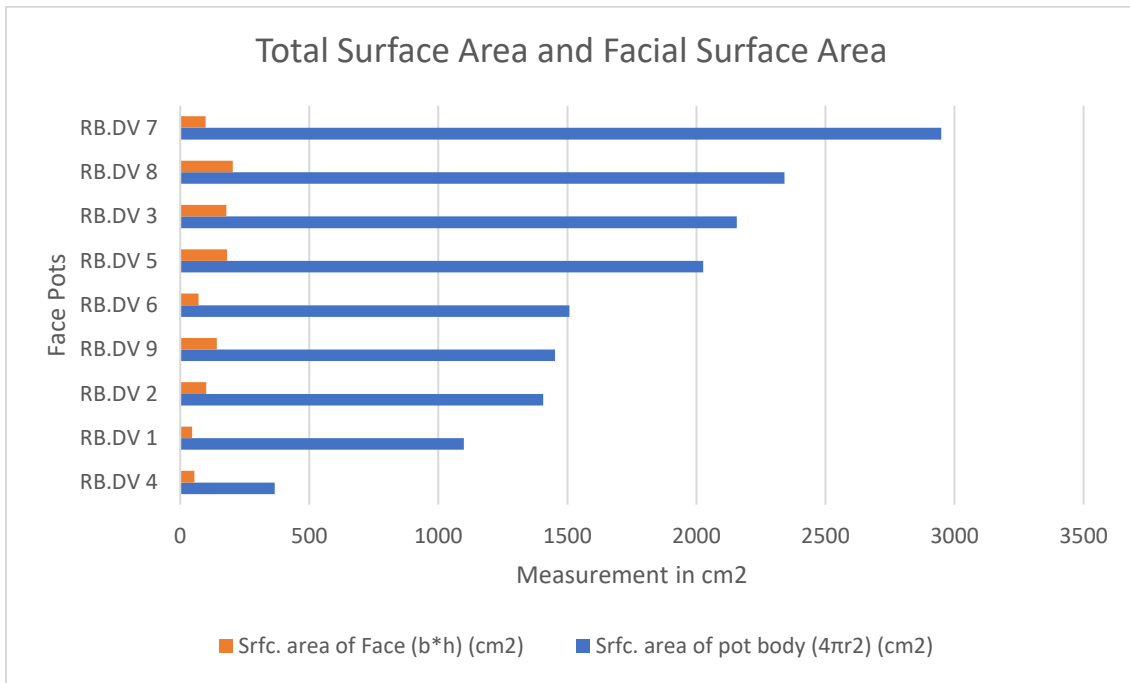
Map: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.

Face Pot Distribution by Context, Period Two: Later First to Early Third Century CE

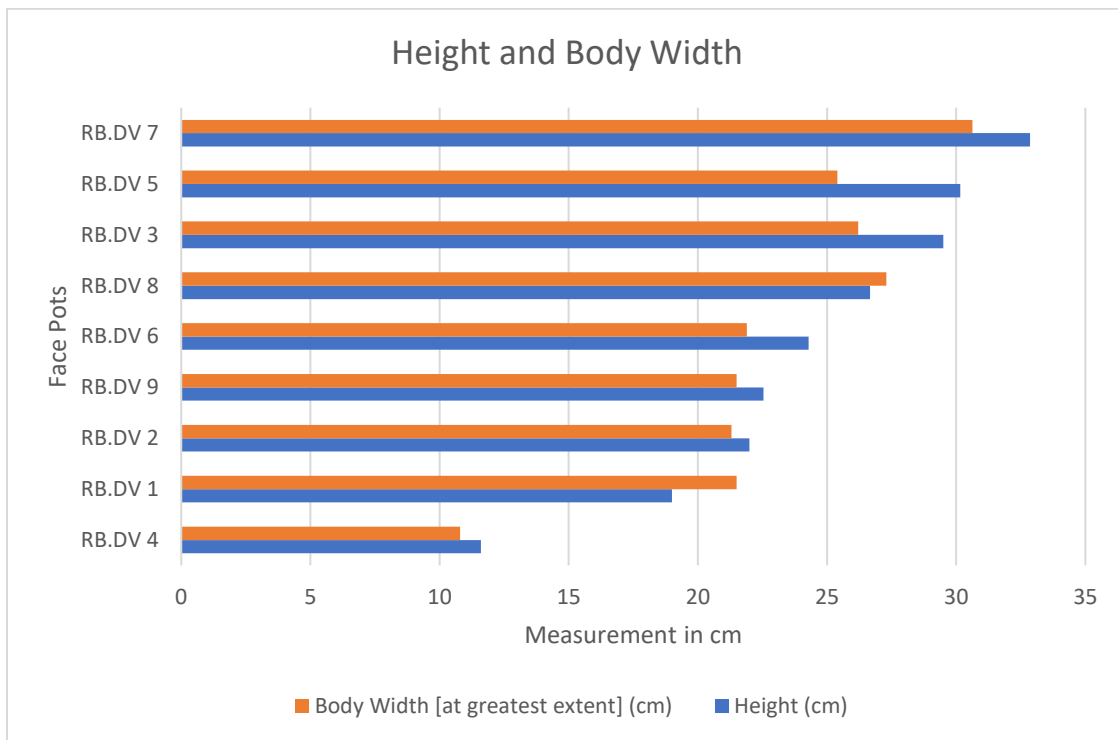


Map 2: RB face pot contextual distributions during period two at: Camelon, Old Penrith, York, Little Chester, Caerwent, Towcester, Verulamium, Welwyn, London, Enfield, Bilerclay, Elms Farm, Springhead, Bodiam, Colchester, Canterbury, East Studdal, Dover, Caistor-by-Norwich, and Caistor-on-Sea. Period Two timeframe after Braithwaite 2007.

Map: Danielle Vander Horst, 2018.



Graph 3: Total surface area of each pot's face compared to the total surface area of the pot's body.



Graph 4: Height of each RB face pot compared to the body width at the greatest extent.

DV Code	Accession #, Location	Museum Description	Date (approx.)	Site	Find Context	Height (cm)	Body Width [at greatest extent] (cm)	Opening Diameter	Volume (ml)	Srfc. area of pot body ($4\pi r^2$)	Srfc. area of Face ($b \cdot h$)	Face = % of total pot body	Relief of Face (cm)
RB.DV 1	AN18961908.R.268, Ashmolean	"Urn with bearded god, mask or man feature..."	50-250 CE	Un-provenanced	most likely funerary	19 cm	21.5 cm	12.2 cm	3423.92 ml	1098.58 cm ²	46.23 cm ²	4.20%	1.9 cm
RB.DV 2	18302, Museum of London	pot; facepot	mid-2nd century	Guildhall	rubbish pit [city of London]	22 cm	21.3 cm	9.5 cm	3150 ml	1406.63 cm ²	100.80 cm ²	7.16%	2.54 cm
RB.DV 3	73.68, Museum of London	pot; facepot	mid-2nd century	Cannon Street? [City of London]	not given	29.5 cm	26.2 cm	11.8 cm	5720.88 ml	2156.51 cm ²	178.6 cm ²	8.28%	1.8 cm
RB.DV 4	A1739, Museum of London	pot; facepot	mid-2nd century	London Wall [City of London]	not given	11.6 cm	10.8 cm	5.9 cm	480 ml	366.44 cm ²	55.2 cm ²	15.06%	1 cm
RB.DV 5	1870, 0402.526, British Museum	cinerary urn; Pottery face urn	not given	Colchester	Possibly funerary	30.16 cm	25.4 cm	8.2 cm (neck); 11.5 cm (rim)	7583.27 ml	2026.83 cm ²	181.25 cm ²	8.94%	1.9 cm
RB.DV 6	COLEM: Jos.818, Colchester	face pot	not given	Colchester	not given	24.28 cm	21.90 cm	9.8 cm (neck); 12.1 cm (rim)	4305 ml	1507.77 cm ²	70.84 cm ²	4.69%	.79 cm
RB.DV 7	COLEM: 1928.363.1, Colchester	face pot	50-100 CE	Cambridge Road, Colchester	urn, funerary	32.86 cm	30.63 cm	12.5 cm (no flared neck)	15061 ml	2949.10 cm ²	97.97 cm ²	3.32%	.95 cm
RB.DV 8	COLEM: Jos.145, Colchester	face pot	145-149 CE	Colchester	grave, funerary	26.67 cm	27.30 cm	13 cm (neck); 15.1 cm (rim)	7872.74 ml	2341.39 cm ²	203.58 cm ²	8.69%	1.58 cm
RB.DV 9	COLEM: PC.619	face pot	not given	Colchester [Abbey Field]	grave/urn, funerary	22.54 cm	21.50 cm	12.2 cm (neck); 15.5 cm (rim)	3300 ml	1452.20 cm ²	141.96 cm ²	9.77%	1.42 cm

Table 3. Measurements and Facial Traits of RB Face Pots from the Ashmolean Museum, the British Museum, the Museum of London, and the Colchester and Ipswich Museums.

No. Handles	Handle Placement	Eyebrow Shape	Eye Type	Nose Type	Mouth Type	Ears?	Beard?	Chin	GB Style Match?	Fabric/Ware	Surface Treatment	Surface Color
3	2 on either side of face, 1 directly opposite face	None	Incised Circles	Beak-like	None	No	Yes	None	RB 13E?	buff ware/coarse ware; grainy texture	Smoothed	light orange, no applied color
2	2 on either side of face	Straight Mushroom	Slit	Beak-like	Slit	Yes	No	None	RB 13D	Verulamium Region White Ware	Smoothed	light buff tan exterior, fabric more orange
3	2 on either side of face (quite close), 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Long and Thin	Pressed	Yes	No	Mound	RB 13D	Verulamium Region Coarse white-slipped ware	Slipped and smoothed	White slip exterior, buff orange interior (though heavily covered in dirt still inside)
3	2 on either side of face, 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Triangular	Slit	Yes	No	None	RB 16	Verulamium Region Coarse white-	Slipped and smoothed	quite dirty, not as white as 73.68, more grey. Deeper orange fabric beneath, some inclusions.
3	2 on either side of face (relatively close), 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Triangular	Slit	Yes	Yes	None	RB 13A	Buff ware, fabric not visible	Slipped and smoothed	white' slipped exterior, not unlike the Verulamium White Ware. Light tan color.
3	2 on either side of the face, 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Long and Thin	Slit	No	No	Mound	RB 13A (strong resemblance to 13D)	red ware	Slipped and smoothed	light orange slip
3	2 on either side of face, 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Pressed	Triangular	Slit	No	No	Mound	RB 13B	Light orange buff ware	Slipped and smoothed	white/tan slip - Verulamium like
3	2 on either side of face, 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Triangular	Donut	Yes	No	None	RB 13A	orange buff ware	Slipped and smoothed	white/tan slip
3	2 on either side of the face, 1 directly opposite face	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Triangular	Slit	Yes	Yes	None	RB 13A	tan buff ware	Slipped and smoothed	white/tan slip

Table 3. Cont.

Date Coded	Accession #, Location	Museum Description	Date (approx.)	Site	Find Context	Height (cm)	Width	Spouts	Eyebrow Shape	Eye Type	Nose Type	Mouth Type	Ears?	Beard?	Chin	Fabric/Ware	Surface Treatment	Surface Color	Srhc. area of Face (b*h)
7/9/2018	21674, Museum of London	pot; facepot (fragment)	Roman; late 1st-2nd century	Walbrook [City of London]	not given	(frag.) 12.5 cm	(frag.) 13 cm	None								red ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	(no ears) 162.5 cm ² ; (ears) 287.5 cm ²
7/9/2018	21739, Museum of London	pot; facepot (fragment)	Late Iron Age-Roman; 1st-2nd century	King's Arms Yard [City of London]	not given	(frag.) 12 cm	(frag.) 14 cm	None								buff ware			(no ears) 168 cm ² ; (ears) 288 cm ²
7/13/2018	GP075[1422]<5965>, Museum of London (MoL) Archives	face-pot; fragment	"Roman"	Newgate Street (London)	not given	5.87 cm (frag.)	4.76 cm	None	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Triangular					red ware, medium inclusions	Slipped and smoothed	White/cream slip exterior	n/a
7/13/2018	A23655, Museum of London Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	Leadenhall Market [City of London]	not given	5.23 cm (frag.)	10.31 cm (frag.)	None	Curved Unibrow							white buff ware, medium inclusions	Slipped and smoothed	White slip? Not unlike Verulamium White Ware	n/a
7/13/2018	89.152/7, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	not given	not given	8.4 cm	8.09 cm	None	*	Pressed	None	Pressed				white buff ware	Smoothed	No slip, exterior smoothed down	n/a
7/13/2018	A16410, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	St.Martin's le-Grand [City of London]	not given	5.23 cm (frag.)	12.85 cm (frag.)	None	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean						red ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	n/a
7/13/2018	14.874, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	Threadneedle Street, Bank [City of London]	not given	7.30 cm (frag.)	15.08 cm (frag.)	None	Straight Mushroom	Slit	Beak-like		Yes	Yes		red ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	(est.) 109.95 cm ²
7/13/2018	29.94/25, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	Princes Street [City of London]	not given	9.68 cm (frag.)	10.00 cm (frag.)	1		Incised Circles			Yes	Yes		red ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	n/a
7/13/2018	11.482, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	Fenchurch Street [City of London]	not given	6.3 cm (frag.)	10.47 cm (frag.)	None	Straight Mushroom	Incised Circles	Triangular					red ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	n/a
7/13/2018	15.201, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	Cornhill [City of London]	not given	7.93 cm (frag.)	11.74 cm (frag.)	None	Curved Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Long and Thin			Yes		red ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	n/a
7/13/2018	89.152/3, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	not given	not given	6.66 cm (frag.)	12.54 cm (frag.)	None	Curved Mushroom	Incised Circles	Triangular					red ware	Slipped and smoothed	dark exterior? Oxidized?	n/a
7/13/2018	3001, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	London	not given	7.93 cm (frag.)	13.33 cm (frag.)	None	Incised	Incised Circles			Yes			red ware, medium inclusions	Smoothed	no slip	n/a
7/13/2018	89.152/6, MoL Archives	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	not given	not given	10.00 cm (frag.)	13.01 cm (frag.)	None	Straight Mushroom	Coffee Bean	Triangular					buff ware, orange in color	Smoothed	no slip, buff ware exterior	n/a
7/13/2018	12.423B, MoL Archive	pot; facepot (fragment)	"Roman"	not given	not given	8.25 cm (frag.)	9.84 cm (frag.)	None		Coffee Bean						orange buff ware	Slipped and smoothed	white slip exterior	n/a

Table 4. Measurements and Facial Traits of RB Face Pot Sherds from the Museum of London and their Archaeological Archives